



**Office of the Washington State Auditor  
Pat McCarthy**

December 20, 2018

Ms. Ashley Archibald of Real Change  
and colleagues in media

Dear Ms. Archibald and colleagues,

Thank you for your letter to Audit Manager Joseph Simmons dated Dec. 7. Mr. Simmons shared your letter with me, because I am the person who works with members of the media on behalf of our office.

After careful consideration, we believe the state's public records law provides a clear path forward.

The law considers the definition of "record" to be broad, and includes many of the items you list such as policies, timeliness of response, and practices related to work product including email. Many, if not most, of the answers you seek can be discerned via document requests under the public records law, then analyzing the responses.

State law also lists specific remedies if anyone suspects a violation, including an appeal to a county's Superior Court.

In addition to those legal venues, there are public disclosure advocacy organizations like the Washington Coalition for Open Government and the Sunlight Foundation, whose focus is ensuring the people's right to access government information.

Because we value transparency, as do you, we are sending a copy of this letter to the attorney and internal auditor for the City of Seattle.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have further questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Cooper".

Kathleen Cooper  
Director of Communications

cc: Pete Holmes, City of Seattle attorney  
David Jones, City of Seattle internal auditor